

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-12. (canceled).

13. (new): A digital communication system comprising modules, including at least one input module and a plurality of internal modules;

said at least one input module and said plurality of internal modules being interconnected;

said input module comprising:

means for receiving an external communication input signal,

means for monitoring said external communication input signal for defects,

means for squelching said external communication input signal when a defect is detected,

and

input module means for outputting said squelched external communication input signal as

an internal signal when a defect is detected; and

at least one of said plurality of internal modules comprising:

means for receiving an internal signal from one of the modules, and

means for monitoring whether said received internal signal is squelched.

14. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein said input module means for outputting outputs said external communication input signal as an internal signal when a defect is not detected.

15. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein said at least one of said plurality of internal modules further comprises:

means for receiving a redundant internal signal from another one of said modules;
internal module means for outputting said redundant internal signal as an internal signal when said received internal signal is detected as squelched.

16. (new): The digital communication system of claim 15, wherein:

said internal module means for outputting outputs said received internal signal as an internal signal when said received internal signal is not detected as squelched.

17. (new): The digital communication system of claim 15, wherein:

said at least one of said plurality of internal modules further comprises means for monitoring said received internal signal for defects; and

said internal module means for outputting outputs said redundant internal signal as an internal signal when a defect is detected, and outputs said received internal signal as an internal signal when a defect is not detected and said received internal signal is not detected as squelched.

18. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein:

said modules further include at least one output module;

said output module comprising:

means for receiving an internal signal from one of said plurality of internal modules;

means for monitoring whether said received internal signal is squelched;

means for receiving a redundant internal signal from another one of plurality of internal modules; and

output module means for outputting said redundant internal signal as an output signal when said received internal signal is detected as squelched.

19. (new): The digital communication system of claim 18, wherein said output module means for outputting outputs said received internal signal as an output signal when said received internal signal is not detected as squelched.

20. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein at least one of said monitoring means comprises a threshold detector.

21. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein at least one of said monitoring means comprises a frequency detector.

22. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein said system is a cross-connect device and wherein at least one of said plurality of internal modules is a switching matrix component.

23. (new): The digital communication system of claim 13, wherein a squelched signal comprises a zero signal.

24. (new): A method for processing a data signal within a communication device, said communication device comprising modules, including at least one input module and a plurality of internal modules, said method comprising:

receiving, by said input module, an external communication input signal,
monitoring, by said input module, said external communication input signal for defects,
squelching, by said input module, said external communication input signal when a defect is detected, and
outputting, by said input module, said squelched external communication input signal as an internal signal when a defect is detected;
receiving, by at least one of said plurality of internal modules, an internal signal from one of said modules, and
monitoring, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, whether said received internal signal is squelched.

25. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 24, further comprising:

outputting, by said input module, said external communication input signal as an internal signal when a defect is not detected.

26. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 24, further comprising:

receiving, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, a redundant internal signal from another one of said modules; and

outputting, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, said redundant internal signal as an internal signal when said received internal signal is detected as squelched.

27. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 26, further comprising:

outputting, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, said received internal signal as an internal signal when said received internal signal is not detected as squelched.

28. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 26, further comprising:

monitoring, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, said received internal signal for defects;

outputting, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, said redundant internal signal as an internal signal when a defect is detected; and

outputting, by said at least one of said plurality of internal modules, said received internal signal as an internal signal when a defect is not detected and said received internal signal is not detected as squelched.

29. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 24, said modules of said communication device further including at least one output module, said method further comprising:

receiving, by said output module, an internal signal from one of said plurality of internal modules;
monitoring, by said output module, whether said received internal signal is squelched;
receiving, by said output module, a redundant internal signal from another one of said plurality of internal modules; and
outputting, by said output module, said redundant internal signal as an output signal when said received internal signal is detected as squelched.

30. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 29, further comprising:

outputting, by said output module, said received internal signal as an output signal when said received internal signal is not detected as squelched.

31. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 24, wherein at least one of said monitoring steps comprises a threshold detection.

32. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 24, wherein at least one of said monitoring steps comprises a frequency detection.

33. (new): The method for processing a data signal within a communication device of claim 24, wherein a squelched signal comprises a zero signal.